A Letter written out of England to an Engliſh Gentleman remaining at *Padua*, containing a true Report of a *ſtrange Conſpiracie, contriued betweene Edward Squire*, lately executed for the ſame treaſon as Actor, and *Richard Walpoole* a *Ieſuite*, as Deuiſer and Suborner againſt the perſon of the Queenes Maieſtie.

Imprinted at London by the Deputies of CHRISTOPHER BARKER, Printer to the Queenes moſt excellent Maieſtie.

1599.

SIR, I thanke you for your Relation of *Ferrara*; and to make you paiment in the like commodities, I returne to you a true report of a freſh accident of State, happened here with vs; memorable for the ſtrangeneſſe of the matter, and the great ſignification it carieth with it of Gods extraordinarie and moſt viſible prouidence; but otherwiſe woorthy to be damned to perpetuall obliuion, as well for the deteſtable nature of the fact, as yet more (if more were poſſible) for the impietie of the perſwaſion; ſuch as I aſſure you, a man ought to make ſcruple to infame the times, or infect mens cogitations with the repetition of it, were it not that theſe workes of darkneſſe are framed and forged in ſuch a deepe vawte of hypocriſie, as there is more danger, that they ſhould be vnreuealed or vnbeleeued, then that being brought to cleare light, they ſhould prouoke an imitation in any, of that which is ſo odious and foule.

And this Sir you may beleeue, that as I haue had good meanes, to informe my ſelfe to the full, of that

which paſſed in this matter, and the trueth of all the particulars, aſwell thoſe which were opened at the arreignment of *Edward Squire*, one of the offenders, as thoſe which were reſerued, ſo I haue ſet downe this Narration, rather abridged of ſome circumſtances, then any wayes amplified or inlarged.

This *Squire* dwelt in *Greenwich* diuers yeeres, and tooke vpon him the practiſe of a Scriuener, yet rather as a helpe to maintaine himſelfe for a time, then that he bare a minde to ſettle in that trade. He obtained alſo before his going to Sea, for ſome two yeres ſpace, an imployment about the Queenes Stable, by way of deputation to one *Kaies*, a Purueiour of thoſe prouiſions. But being of a wit aboue his vocation, diſliked with that condition of life, and put himſelfe into action by Sea, in the laſt voyage Sir *Francis Drake* made into the *Indies*; in which voyage, it was his hap, that the *Frances* (a ſmall barke wherein he went) was ſcattered from the Fleet about *Guadalupe*, and taken by fiue Spaniſh frigots. And ſo was *Squire* brought priſoner into *Spaine*, where ſoone after he was ſet at libertie.

Not long after his inlargement, he became known to *Richard Walpoole* an Engliſh fugitiue, and by order a *Ieſuite*, a man of principall credit there, and a kinde of Vicar generall to *Parſons* in his abſence. This *Walpoole*, carrying a waking & waiting eye, vpon thoſe of our Nation, to diſcouer and ſingle out fit inſtruments for the greateſt treaſons, obſerued this *Squire*, found him a man of more then ordinarie ſence and capacitie, for his qualitie and education; found him a man, that had paſſed his middle age, well aduiſed, and yet

reſolued

reſolued enough, and not apprehenſiue at all of danger; (for I doe affirme this vnto you, that neuer man anſwered vpon his triall for life and death, with leſſe perturbation, nay ſcarſely with any alteration, as if he vnderſtood not his perill and calamitie, and yet as ſenſible for ſpeech, as inſenſible for paſſion.) But beſides the diſpoſition and temper of the man, *Walpoole* diſcerned in him two conditions of ſpeciall aduantage; The one, that comming into *Spaine* a priſoner, and not a fugitiue, his returne into *England* would be ſubiect to leſſe ſuſpition: The other, that he vnderſtood, *Squire* had formerly had ſome attendance about the Queenes Stable, which he ſtreight caught holde of, as an opportunity.

Yet neuertheleſſe, the better to prepare him, and worke him to his purpoſe; and the better alſo to giue couler, (when *Squire* ſhould returne into *England*) that he was a man that had ſuffered in *Spaine* for his conſcience, ſubtilly he compaſſed, that vpon a quarrell picked, *Squire* was put into the Inquiſition. By this meanes, when he had got his heart into his handes, mollified by diſtreſſe, and became ſecure of him, that he was a fixed and reſolued Papiſt.

After probation and preparation ſufficient, hee began to open himſelfe vnto him; and firſt for introduction, fell into the ordinary burden or ſong, of that kinde of people, touching the tyrannies and perſecutions exerciſed here in *England* againſt Catholiques; though Sir, you know very well, the diſtinction and moderation of the proceedings here in Eccleſiaſticall cauſes, with what lenitie, and gentleneſſe, it hath bene caried, except where it was mixed with matter

of State; for els I would gladly learne, what ſhould make the difference, betweene the temper of the Lawes in the firſt yeere of the Queene, and in 23. or 27. but that at the one time, they were Papiſts in conſcience, and at the other they were growne Papiſts in faction; or what ſhould make the difference at this day in Lawe, betweene a Queene *Mary* Prieſt, and a *Seminarie* Prieſt, ſaue that the one is a Prieſt of ſuperſtition, and the other is a Prieſt of ſedition. But to the purpoſe; After the *Ieſuite* had at ſundry conferences, diſcourſed his pleaſure of the miſeries of Catholiques here in *England*, and of the ſlanders of the gouernment, and vpon how fewe perſons liues, the State here did ſtand; and *Squire* on the other ſide, (who wanted no witte to perceiue which way hee was ledde) had firſt made ſome ſignification, and after ſome more ſerious and vehement proteſtation of his minde and deuotion, to doe ſeruice to the cauſe, when the wicked Frier ſawe hee was gotten into the true circle, hee began to charme; and yet not hauing the power to fall vpon the higheſt point firſt, without a gradation or bridge, *It were no doubt* (ſaith hee) *an acte very meritorious to kill the Earle of* Eſſex, *but* Vnum neceſſarium, *One thing is neceſſary.* And hauing kept him in ſuſpence a while, brake with him plainely, and tolde him, that hee would put a ſeruice into his hands, that he might execute and accompliſh, without any euident perill of his life, becauſe it was to be done, what time the Queene her ſelfe ſhould not bee in preſence; (which I thinke he ſpake as hauing heard that which is very true, of ſome Conſpirators, that hauing vndertaken and vowed her Maieſties deſtruction,

ction, haue neuertheleſſe at the very inſtant of the acceſſe and opportunitie, bene ſtricken with aſtoniſhment, and had no power to execute their malice.) Nay further he ſaid, that he ſhould not need to feare, in the doing thereof, to be ſeene or obſerued, by any perſons of care or iudgement, but ſuch as might be eaſily conuerſed withall, without ſuſpition: And it was the impoyſonment of the pommell of the Queenes Sadell, at ſuch time as ſhee ſhould ride abroad; her Maieſtie being like to reſt her hand thereupon, for a good time together, and not vnlike for her hand to come often about her face, mouth, and noſethrils; and this by reaſon of his former acquaintance and ſeruice about the Stable, he thought hee might eaſily performe, and ſafely; And yet he ſaid, *If imminent death ſhould inſue thereupon hee might not accompt of it, as beeing aſſured that hee ſhould exchange his preſent ſtate, with the ſtate of a glorious Saint in heauen.* Vnto which accurſed propoſition after that *Squire* had aſſented, then did the Frier vſe all diligence to confirme and binde him to reſolution and performance. And to that ende, at ſundry confeſſions tooke his vow and promiſe to be conſtant; cauſed him to receiue the Sacrament vpon it; renued his diueliſh perſwaſions, varying them in all fourmes to beſiege his minde and cogitations, that he might finde no way to get out of this wicked purpoſe; Telling him *that he ſtood now in the ſtate of damnation, if he did not his vttermoſt endeuour to perfourme his vowe.* And bid him remember *how that ſinne did ſeldome obtaine pardon; and if he did but once make doubt of the lawfulneſſe or merit of the acte, it was enough to caſt him headlong*

downe

downe into hell; And if he did caſt any difficulties or terrors, he wiſhed him to conſider *What it did auaile a man to winne the whole world, and to leeſe his owne ſoule.* So as now *Squire* muſt not deſcend into himſelfe, he muſt make no obiections, caſt no doubts; but the eyes of his vnderſtanding blinded and ſealed vp, he muſt onely contemplate vpon theſe vowes and adiurations. And for a concluſion and finall benediction of this moſt execrable plot, *Squire* kneeling before *Wallpoole* at confeſſion, he lifted him vp, hugde him about the necke with his left arme (ſuch were *Squires* owne wordes) and croſſing him with the other hand after ſome wordes mumbled in Latine, ſayd diſtinctly to him in Engliſh, *God bleſſe thee and giue thee ſtrength my ſonne; be of good courage, I pawne my ſoule for thine, and thou ſhalt haue my prayers dead and aliue.* And vpon this imbracement and inchantment, this deſperate wretch and this blaſphemous Exorciſt parted for that time.

Then doeth he giue him ful inſtructions for the diſpoſing of this poiſon; ſhewing him that he ſhould receiue it in a double bladder, and when it ſhould bee vſed, hee was to pricke the bladder full of holes vpon the vpper part, and ſo to carie it within the palme of his hand with a thicke gloue for the ſafegard of his hand: and in the inſtant when it was to be applied, he ſhould turne it in his hand the vpſide downe, and ſo preſſe it hard vpon the pommell of the ſaddell: telling him further of the nature of it, That it would lie and tarrie long where it was laide; and that it would not be checked by the aire. And laſtly vpon his comming away, deliuered him the confection it ſelfe in ſuch a bladder as was before deſcribed.

This

This was the true maner of the ſubornation of *Edward Squire* by *Richard Wallpoole* as it was confeſſed by the ſame *Squire* almoſt in the ſame wordes, as well for the perſwaſions as for the inſtructions. Which confeſſion I doe affirme vnto you vpon knowledge was deliuered without torture or ſhewe of torture: and was roundly and ſenſibly vttered with all circumſtances of a credible narration for that part which concerneth the maner of the impoiſonment: and for that part which concerneth the manner of the perſwaſion was ſet downe by an aduiſed declaration vnder his owne hand, and the ſame as farre as hitherto we haue gone, was mainteined and confirmed, and in no point retracted or diſauowed, either at his trial or at his death.

It ſeemes alſo that *Wallpoole* in ſome of his conferences did inſiſt vpon the impoiſonment of the Earle of *Eſſex*, the rather to defeate the voyage by Sea, then exſpected (for theſe things paſt about May 1597.) So as *Squire* conceiued it, there could bee no one thing more acceptable in the ſecond degree.

Nowe after that *Squire* had receiued both poiſons, as well the ſpirituall poiſon of wicked reſolution, as the materiall within the bladders; and that *Wallpoole* had interlaced ſome promiſe to him of rewardes and comforts, beſides thoſe of the other world, and had ſchooled him for ſecrécie, which he made to be parcel of his vow, there reſted onely his diſpatch for *England*. Whereunto to giue an apt colour, it was deuiſed that there ſhould be a permutation treated by the meanes of a Chanon in *Ciuill* of two *Spaniſh* priſoners here, taken at *Cales*, friends of the ſaide Chanon, for *Squire* and *Rowles* nowe Priſoner in the Towre, who came o-

uer with him wherby it might be caried, farre off from ſuſpition, that *Squire* did not returne as a man imploied, but vpon that priuate occaſion. According to which proiect he was ſent away conueniently moneyed, that he might be the better in heart, and yet not ſo abundantly as might make him loue his life too well, and to goe away with his fare quietly, though indeed there were more money ſtirring, but not in that hand.

And being arriued here in *England* about a fortnight before the Earles ſetting foorth towardes the Ilandes, hee did addreſſe himſelfe to a Counſeller of Eſtate here, both to ſhew himſelfe to the end to auoid ſuſpition, and with pretence alſo of ſome aduertiſements, to the ende to winne the better opinion and truſt; and finding his comming well conceiued of according to his deſire, hee did craftily and ſubtilely deuiſe with himſelfe, that if he could finde any opportunitie to execute his purpoſe before the Earle went, (ſuppoſing that the poyſon could not worke but in ſome ſpace of time) it would be more ſecuritie for him to be abſent, and in the voyage, leſt percaſe ſome ſuſpitious tokens of poiſon appearing, ſomewhat might fall out (vpon ſuch diligent inquiſition as in ſuch a caſe were like to bee made) to bee diſcouered againſt him; and therefore made his meanes to goe with the Earle in his ſhippe, and obtained his ſute. So as nowe making his reckoning to haue the peril vpon his back, he did but watch his time.

And it pleaſed God for the manifeſtation of his glory, that the Mundaie ſeuennight next after *Squires* comming home out of *Spaine*, he vnderſtood that the horſes were making readie for her Maieſties riding a-

broad. Whereupon, full of thoſe euill ſpirites where-with ſo many exorciſmes had poſſeſſed him, hee came into the Stable yard where her Maieſties horſe ſtood ready ſadled, and in a familiar and cheerefull maner in the hearing of diuers that ſtood thereby, hauing all things ready according to his inſtructions, he laied his hand vpon the pommell of the Saddle, and ſayd, *God ſaue the Queene*, (wherein it pleaſed God to take his words and not his meaning) and bruized the poiſon as he was directed.

Thus was her Maieſties ſacred and precious life by the All-haile of a ſecond *Iudas* betrayed, the attempt put in act, and all the Conſpirators part plaied to the vttermoſt line and title; there reſted onely Gods part: For ſo it was, that her Maieſties going abroad held; & as the Viper was vpon S. *Pauls* hand, and ſhaked off without hurt; ſo this done, was in *Iuly* in the heate of the yeere, when the poores and veines were openeſt to receiue any maligne vapor or tincture, if her Maieſtie by any accident had layd her hand vpon the place. And as the Heatheniſh people at that time did argue and conclude thereupon, that S. *Paul* was a God, ſo wee may chriſtianly inferre that it was Gods doing and power who hath defended his Handmaid and ſeruant by his ſecret and more then naturall influence and preſeruatiue from ſo actuall & mortall a danger, ſpeaking by theſe ſignes to all her diſloyall Subiects and ambitious enemies, That as he hath done great things by her, paſt ordinarie diſcourſe of reaſon, ſo he hath done, and will doe as great things for her, beyond the courſe of his ordinarie prouidence.

For ſurely, if a man conſider how many times her

life hath bene ſought and aſſailed, ſince the beginning of her raigne, by violence, by poiſoning, by ſuperſticious Votaries, by ambicious Vndertakers, by ſingular Conſpirators, by Conſpirators combined, (ſpeaking of thoſe that haue bene reuealed; beſides a number (no doubt) of the like which haue groueled in darkeneſſe, and neuer came to light) hee will not find the like reflexion of Gods fauour in any Soueraigne Prince that hath reigned.

But in the meane time you ſee the ſtrange myſteries of the *Ieſuites* doctrine that haue mingled heauen and hel, and lift vp the hands of Subiects againſt the anointed of God; arming them with the inuiſible armour of Scriptures, Sacraments, Vowes, Prayers and Bleſſings againſt their naturall Soueraigns. Wherein there is great difference betweene the ſpirite that wrought in *Dauid*, and this that worketh in them. For *Dauid* when relation was made to him (by one that thought he had done *Saul* the laſt good office) how *Saul* had fallen vpon his owne ſword in battell, and being in the anguiſh of death, and carefull not to fall aliue in the handes of the *Philiſtims* a people vncircumciſed, deſired this ſoldiour to make an ende of him, who did ſo, and was therefore by *Dauid* adiudged to die, becauſe hee dared to lay his hands vpon the anointed of the Lord: and yet was *Saul* a king forſaken and abandoned of God; he had taken his mortall wound before, ſo as this ſoldiour tooke from him his paine, and not his life; and it was to a good ende, leaſt a heatheniſh people ſhould reproch the name of God by inſulting vpon the perſon of *Saul*.

And ſurely for my part I doe wonder that Princes doe

doe not concurre in looſing theſe bands, and ſuppreſſing this Sect, which maketh a traffique of their ſacred liues, concluding and contracting for them with theſe blinded Votaries in the ſecrecie of confeſſions and ſhrifts. For I doe not ſee that Pirates (whom the *Ciuilians* account to be *Publici hoſtes ſocietatis humanæ*, and therefore Princes bound as they affirme, though they be otherwiſe in no league one with an other, yea and though they be enemies, to ioyne in the ſuppreſſing & extirpation of them) are any ſuch diſturbers of humane ſocietie as theſe are. Neither doe I thinke, that the order of the *Templers* (that was put down throughout Chriſtendome in a fewe weekes) were euer offenders in ſo high a degree. And I find ſomewhat ſtrange that the biſhop of *Rome* (if it were but to auoyd the aſperſion of ſo great a ſlander and imputation to that Religion) ſhould not purge out this leauen ſo ſtrange and odious.

But to returne: within fiue or ſixe dayes after this fact committed, *Squire* went to Sea in the Erles owne ſhip, and belike as *Tacitus* ſayth, *Ferox ſcelerum quia prima prouenerant*, taking the remaine of the ſame poiſon with him in a little pot in his portmantue, when the Earle was at Sea betweene *Faial* and *S. Michael*, he beſtowed it vpon the pommels of a chaire of wood, where the Earle vſed to dine and ſup: but thankes be to God nothing came of it neither.

Now let me acquaint you a little with the maner of detecting of this matter, which God did likewiſe ſtrangely bring about. *Squire* ſlept now in ſecuritie: for although he failed of ſucceſſe, yet he tooke himſelfe to be out of danger: thinking becauſe it was car-

ried betweene his Confeſſour and him, it could neuer be reuealed. But his Confeſſour whom it imported not ſo much to keepe it ſecret as it did *Squire*, tickled belike with the ioy, that he had ſuch an iron in the fire, imparted it (for his owne glory) to ſome principall of the fugitiues there; This raiſed a great expectation in them of ſome effect to inſue. When time paſſed, and nothing came of it, they made conſtruction of it, that *Squire* had beene falſe to them. One of the more paſſionate of them inueyeth bitterly againſt *Squire*, telles how he was truſted, and how he had vndone the cauſe; and the better to be reuenged on him, is content that one (that they let ſlip hither as if he had fled from them) ſhould giue information of this matter, not with the circumſtances, but generally againſt *Squire*, partly to win himſelfe credit, partly to wrecke themſelues on *Squire*. And this fellow, becauſe hee would be thought to do the better ſeruice, would not bring this in his mouth, but in a letter, which he pretended to haue ſtolne out of one of their Studies. This letter compared with another letter that the ſame man brought as written from a ſeuerall perſon, both which letters had one and the ſame buſie knot to both names, is ſuſpected to be counterfeited; it is ſo found. Heereupon it is collected that this was but an engine againſt *Squire*, and that he was an honeſt man. Yet becauſe it was a tender matter, *Squire* was ſent for and examined. For a time he denieth; after, he commeth to ſome circumſtances, which concurring with the others tale, it gaue it to be vnderſtood that there was ſomewhat true, and that all was not an inuention againſt him: Holde was taken of that; and thereupon

Squire,

Squire, not knowing how farre his Confeſſor had broken truſt with him, by good perſwaſion, and Gods good working, diſcloſed all without any rigour in the world.

But vpon a ſecond aduiſe being a man of a very good reach, finding that it had bene his wiſeſt way to haue confeſſed the whole plot and ſubornation which was knowen to *Wallpoole*, and there to haue ſtopt, and not to haue tolde of the putting of it in execution, which was onely knowne to himſelfe, and which indeede was wonne from him by good following, hee endeuoured at his arraignment to haue diſtinguiſhed, and auowching the firſt part, to haue retracted the ſecond; pretending that although he vndertooke it, yet he had not any purpoſe to performe it.

Whereupon one of the Commiſſioners being wel acquainted with all the particular circumſtances, did ſet before him the abſurditie of his deniall againſt his former confeſſion which was voluntarie, particular, and needleſſe (otherwiſe then in conſcience of trueth) vpon which ſpeech hee being ſtricken with remorſe, and conuicted in himſelfe, acknowledged and iuſtified the trueth of his former confeſſion in the hearing of all the ſtanders by.

Thus Sir, I haue interteined you with a diſcourſe, which I thinke in reading will affect you diuerſly, as it did me in writing; But in the ende I thinke wee ſhall ioyne in congratulating for our good deliuerance, and deſiring of God the continuance of her Maieſtie, in whom our good dayes do conſiſt.

(***)